

Message Text

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PAGE 01 HONG K 09577 240944Z

11

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SPC-03 SS-15 RSC-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 USIA-15 PRS-01

OMB-01 TRSE-00 EB-11 DRC-01 L-03 /096 W

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P R 240915Z SEP 73

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON PRIORITY

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 8265

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 9577

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRN HK VS

SUMMARY. HONG KONG PRESS REPORTS THAT SMUGGLING OF BRASS FROM VIETNAM CONTINUES DESPITE A GVN BAN ON EXPORT. THE VIETNAMESE CONSUL GENERAL WILL CALL ON CONGEN AFTERNOON SEPTEMBER 26 TO DUSCUSS THIS SITUATION. END SUMMARY.

1. ACCORDING TO A REPORT IN THE HONG KONG STANDARD SEPTEMBER 23, MORE THAN 400 TONS OF BRASS SCRAP AND 100 TONS OF COPPER WIRE ARE SMUGGLED MONTHLY TO HONG KONG WITH THE AID OF CORRUPT VIETNAMESE OFFICIALS. LAST JUNE SEA-LAND'S CONTAINER SHIP BEAUREGARD, CARRYING CONTAINERS FILLED WITH CONTRABAND BRASS BOUND FOR HONG KONG, REFUSED TO STOP WHEN INTERCEPTED BY A SOUTH VIETNAMESE NAVY PATROL BOAT OUTSIDE DA NANG. THE REPORT ALSO STATES THAT THE NAVAL ATTACHE OF THE U.S. EMBASSY IN SAIGON IGNORED A RADIOED APPEAL TO INTERCEDE AND TURN THE SHIP BACK TO DA NANG. ACCORDING TO MR. E.B. HALL, TREASURER OF SEA-LAND SERVICES INC., ELIZABETH, N.J. THERE IS NO DIRECT EVIDENCE, HOWEVER, THAT ANY MEMBER OF THE SHIP'S COMPANY DID ANYTING WRONG. THE VIETNAMESE CONSULATE HAS DENIED ANY KNOWLEDGE OF BRASS BEING IMPORTED INTO HONG KONG AND SAID IT HAD BEEN BANNED FROM EXPORT SINCE AUGUST 4.

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2. SEA-LAND'S OPERATIONS MANAGER, COMMENTING ON THIS PRESS

STORY, TODL THE CONGEN TODAY THAT AN UNIDENTIFIED VESSEL
HAD ATTEMPTED TO INTERCEPT THE BEAUREGARD OFF DA NANG LAST
JUNE, THAT THE SAME SHIP AND MASTER HAD RETURNED TO VIETNAM
SEVERAL TIMES SINCE WITHOUT INCIDENT AND THAT SEA-LAND HAD
HAD NO REASON TO QUESTION SHIPMENTS SINCE DOCUMENTS WERE IN
ORDER.

3. CONGEN WOULD APPRECIATE ANY BACKGROUND AND COMMENTS IF
POSSIBLE BEFORE THE VIETNAMESE CONSUL GENERAL COMES IN
WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON.
OSBORN

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